

TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

HIDALGO County

MINUTE ORDER

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PHARR District

Pursuant to Chapter 370 of the Transportation Code, and 43 TAC Chapter 26 (RMA rules), Hidalgo County (county) petitioned the Texas Transportation Commission (commission) for authorization to form a Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) in Hidalgo County. The petition was filed on April 21, 2005.

By letter dated May 27, 2005, the Texas Department of Transportation (department) notified the county that the petition met the requirements of §26.11 of the RMA rules.

The petition identifies a toll-road network as potential candidate projects for development by the RMA. The projects identified in the petition consist of an approximately 104-mile Hidalgo County Loop, the US 83 La Joya Relief Route, and a US 281 alternate route from north of Edinburg to the Pharr International Bridge. The initial project cited in the petition, the proposed Hidalgo County Loop, will provide an important reliever route for some of the noncommercial traffic, and will provide for improved traffic circulation within the county.

The board of directors of the RMA, as set forth in the petition, will be composed of seven members, with six members appointed by the Hidalgo County Commissioners Court, and the presiding officer, who will serve as chairperson, appointed by the Governor.

On July 13, 2005, the department conducted a public hearing in Hidalgo County, pursuant to §26.12 of the RMA rules, to receive public comment on the proposed formation of the RMA. Notice of the public hearing was published in the *Texas Register* and in a newspaper of general circulation in the county.

At the public hearing, five elected officials and five individuals spoke in favor of the creation of the RMA. One elected official and seven individuals spoke in opposition to the creation of the RMA, with an additional thirteen individuals speaking in opposition to a specific project. Three individuals submitted written comments, one in favor of creation of the RMA and two opposing the development of a specific toll road.

The commission finds that the creation of the RMA has sufficient public support. The commission bases this finding on: (1) the resolution of support from the Commissioners Court of Hidalgo County; and (2) the support indicated at the public hearing and in the written comments.

The commission finds that creation of the RMA will result in direct benefits to the state, local governments, and the traveling public, and will improve the efficiency of the state's transportation systems. The RMA will benefit the state by constructing needed roadway projects, such as the network identified in the county's petition, as the county's potential candidate projects. The RMA will benefit local governments by increasing local control over transportation planning and through additional transportation projects that may be funded through surplus revenue earned by the RMA. The traveling public will also benefit through improved mobility and traffic safety throughout the region encompassed by the RMA. The RMA will improve the efficiency of the state's transportation systems through the construction of the potential candidate project, which will enhance mobility and safety within these segments of the state highway system, and through the development and financing of additional projects in the future.

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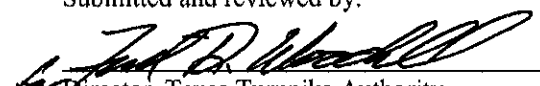
The commission finds that the potential candidate project is: consistent with the approved Texas Transportation Plan; included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program; and included in the approved plan of the Metropolitan Planning Organization. Subject to commission approval of the project under §26.31 of the RMA rules, the commission also finds that the project will benefit the traveling public.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the commission authorizes the creation of the RMA.

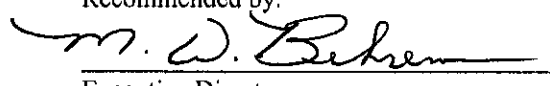
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the potential candidate project that may be developed, maintained, and operated by the RMA shall be the network identified above. This order does not constitute final commission approval of the project, which must be obtained pursuant to Chapter 370 of the Transportation Code and the applicable provisions of the RMA rules.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the initial board of directors shall be composed of seven members, with six members appointed by the Hidalgo County Commissioners Court, and the presiding officer appointed by the Governor.

Submitted and reviewed by:


Director, Texas Turnpike Authority
Division

Recommended by:


Executive Director

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Minute
Number

Date
Passed